



## **MONTANA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

**Meeting Date:** September 17, 2020

**Agenda Item:** Update on State Parks Strategic Planning Process

**Action Needed:** Informational

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 30 minutes

---

### **Background:**

Beginning last fall, Division staff began to identify and implement an approach for updating the Montana State Parks' Division 2015-20 strategic plan, *Charting a New Tomorrow*. Two key factors that informed the approach included: recognizing the plan had been developed in a different environment than where the Division currently stands; and, that there is high value in taking into consideration other recently-issued plans and reports related to outdoor recreation and the Division's work such as Montana's Statewide Outdoor Recreation Report (SCORP) and the Parks in Focus report *A New Day for Montana State Parks*. Rather than re-creating a new strategic plan, we looked to other models and decided to instead create a two-year action plan aimed at providing a more concise depiction of what the Division can realistically do, or begin doing, while taking into consideration key factors such as staff capacity, funding, and the breadth and scope of other important issues that impact Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) as a whole. Consequently, this decision was also informed by the opportunity to align our planning efforts to the legislative calendar. In subsequent years we plan to make updates to the action plan on a two-year cycle.

Board members have been kept apprised of progress at previous meetings and our goal remains to deliver a final plan by the end of the year, prior to the 2021 legislative session. Our draft action plan consists of ten goals, each with a small set of action items, organized topically.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results:**

As Division Administrator Shumate has previously stated, due to the many opportunities for public outreach and information gathering on state park and outdoor recreation issues, such as the Parks in Focus initiative and SCORP efforts in the past year, and with limitations on in-person gatherings during this year, we took a light touch in our approach to outreach. Nonetheless, we aimed to gather a wide diversity of perspectives from individuals who in the past had not been given opportunities to weigh in. This included assembling a 15-member Advisory Committee, comprised mostly of FWP staff from across Divisions and with key regional representation. We also developed a 12-member Sounding Board which consisted of experts and constituents from various sectors with whom we often intersect: tourism, public health, tribal affairs, transportation, academia, the Montana State Park Foundation, Governor's Office of Outdoor recreation, to name a handful. We will be issuing the draft action plan publicly for a 30-day public comment period mid-September. To advance outreach efforts, we plan to utilize technology and social media to engage a broad array of voices.